

bursting said forwardmost coupon from the next coupon in said continuous web along said weakened web portion; and

placing said forwardmost coupon into said food packaging.

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6. (New) A method for positioning coupons at a predetermined location, one at a time, each of said coupons having a leading edge and a trailing edge, said coupons being provided as a stream of coupons in a continuous web with a forwardmost coupon having its trailing edge connected to the leading edge of the next coupon in said continuous web by a weakened web portion extending transversely of said web, and each successive coupon being similarly connected in said web, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a signal related to the time at which said forwardmost coupon is to be positioned at said predetermined location;

bursting said forwardmost coupon from the next coupon in said continuous web along said weakened web portion; and

placing said forwardmost coupon at said predetermined location in response at least in part to said signal.

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7. (New) A method of delivering coupons to containers at a predetermined point of insertion, one at a time, the coupons being provided in a continuous web wherein a trailing edge of a forwardmost coupon is detachably connected to a leading edge of a successive coupon by a weakened separable portion there between and wherein each coupon after the successive coupon is similarly connected in the web, the method thereby of manufacturing containers having coupons therein and comprising the steps of:

providing a coupon separation and delivery subassembly between said continuous web and said predetermined point of insertion, said subassembly including feed rolls and positioning rolls, said positioning rolls disposed downstream of said feed rolls;

advancing said continuous web of coupons utilizing said feed rolls; and

separating said forwardmost coupon from said successive coupon and delivering said forwardmost coupon to one of said containers at said predetermined point of insertion.

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8. (New) A method of delivering coupons to containers at a predetermined point of insertion, one at a time, the coupons being provided in a continuous web wherein a trailing edge of a forwardmost coupon is detachably connected to a leading edge of a successive coupon by a weakened separable portion there between and wherein each coupon after the successive coupon is similarly connected in the web, the method thereby manufacturing containers having coupons therein and comprising the steps of:

providing a signal pertaining to when to insert said forwardmost coupon into one of said containers at said predetermined point of insertion;

providing a coupon separation and delivery subassembly between said continuous web and said predetermined point of insertion, said subassembly including feed rolls and positioning rolls, said positioning rolls disposed downstream of said feed rolls;

advancing said continuous web utilizing said feed rolls; and

separating said forwardmost coupon from said successive coupon in response at least in part to said signal and delivering said forwardmost coupon to one of said containers at said predetermined point of insertion.

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9. (New)

Apparatus for positioning coupons into containers, one at a time, at a predetermined location, each of said coupons having a leading edge and a trailing edge, said coupons being provided as a stream of coupons arranged in a continuous web of successive coupons with a forwardmost coupon having its trailing edge connected to the leading edge of the next coupon in said continuous web by a weakened web portion extending transversely of said web, and each successive coupon being similarly connected in said web, said apparatus comprising:

support apparatus;

positioning rolls rotatably mounted relative to said support apparatus and defining a bight to receive the leading edge of said forwardmost coupon;

feed rolls rotatably mounted relative to said support apparatus, said feed rolls being oriented to direct said leading edge of said forwardmost coupon into said bight; and

feed drive to drive at least one of said feed rolls to move said leading edge of said forwardmost coupon toward said bight, bursting said forwardmost coupon and moving said forwardmost coupon toward said container at said predetermined location.

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10. (New)

Apparatus for positioning coupons into containers at a point of insertion, said coupons provided in a continuous web wherein the trailing edge of a first coupon is connected to the leading edge of a successive coupon with a separable portion, said apparatus comprising:

coupon advancing apparatus including feed rolls and feed drive to rotate said feed rolls, said feed rolls engaging said continuous web to advance said first coupon of said continuous web to a delivery position; and

delivery apparatus, including positioning rolls for engaging said first coupon and positioning drive to rotate said positioning rolls to separate the trailing edge of said first coupon from the leading edge of said successive coupon along said separable portion, to deliver said first coupon into at least one of said containers at said point of insertion.

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11. (New) An apparatus for delivering coupons, one at a time, to containers at a predetermined location, said coupons being provided in a continuous web wherein a trailing edge of a forwardmost coupon is detachably connected to a leading edge of a successive coupon by a weakened separable portion disposed therebetween, each coupon following said successive coupon being similarly connected in said web, said apparatus comprising:

opposed positioning rolls rotatably mounted and defining a bight for receiving the leading edge of said forwardmost coupon;

opposed feed rolls disposed upstream from said positioning rolls, said feed rolls rotatably mounted and oriented for directing the leading edge of said forwardmost coupon into said bight of said positioning rolls;

a positioning drive mechanism coupled to at least one of said positioning rolls for driving said positioning rolls and moving said forwardmost coupon; and

a feed drive mechanism coupled to at least one of said feed rolls for driving said feed rolls and moving the leading edge of said forwardmost coupon toward said bight of said positioning rolls, separating the trailing edge of said forwardmost coupon from the leading edge of said successive coupon, and delivering the separated forwardmost coupon to said container at said predetermined location.

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12. (New) A coupon processing system for delivering coupons to food packaging at a predetermined point of insertion, said coupon processing system comprising:

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a coupon supply including a continuous web of coupons wherein a trailing edge of a first coupon is connected to a leading edge of a successive coupon by a separable portion there between, each coupon thereafter being similarly connected in said continuous web;

a coupon delivery assembly disposed downstream of said coupon supply, said coupon delivery assembly including a set of feed rolls and a set of positioning rolls disposed downstream of said feed rolls, and said coupon delivery system separating said first coupon from said successive coupon and insertion of said first coupon into said food package at said predetermined point of insertion.

REMARKS

Applicant adds new claims 5-12 as noted above.

In the Office Action of November 9, 2000, the Examiner rejected claims 2-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent 5,966,906. Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection is not proper. The '906 patent issued October 19, 1999 on application filed September 17, 1998 claiming priority of an application earlier filed on December 10, 1996. The present application was filed June 22, 1999 as the latest continuation in a series of co-pending continuation applications, the earliest of which was filed May 8, 1989. Because Applicant properly claims benefit of Serial No. 07/348,860, filed May 8, 1989, the ultimate parent of the present application, Applicant submits that the '906 patent is not an appropriate prior art reference against the present application. Thus, the Examiner's rejection is not well taken.